

Press Release

UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX celebrates 10 years of digital ecosystem building in Dubai – continuous growth trailblazing digitalization in the GCC region

Frankfurt (Germany)/Dubai (UAE), 24 November 2022: DE-CIX, the world's leading Internet Exchange (IX) operator, and du/datamena celebrate this week the 10th anniversary of the first and foremost data center and carrier neutral IX in the Middle East, UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX in Dubai. Established in 2012, the Exchange has experienced consistent double-digit annual growth, and in 2022 alone has enjoyed more than 30% growth in data traffic and 50% growth in connected capacity, bringing the platform to 3 terabits. It now interconnects close to 100 customers, comprising a mix of global enterprises, carriers, cloud, content providers, and emerging technology platforms, alongside banking and financial services companies, making it home to the largest data center and carrier neutral interconnection ecosystem in the Middle East. In addition, the initiative to create a Union of Internet Exchanges in the UAE, led by the UAE's Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), has recently been completed. Interconnecting UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX with Etisalat by e&'s SmartHub IX, this initiative breaks new ground as the first collaboration of its kind ever to be undertaken in the Middle East, creating the best-ever connectivity reach in the region.

The digital pearl of the GCC

"The ecosystem around the UAE-IX which has been created in Dubai and the UAE over the past 10 years is a unique and marvelous real-life example of how a global Internet hub can be established, and how, in turn, it can begin a cycle of success that will benefit the surrounding countries, economies, and users. This approach to development sets the stage for undreamt-of investments and quality improvements for Internet experience and digital services for both businesses and consumers. The UAE-IX today stands as a global Internet hub, bringing together the network operators, content, applications, and cloud services to serve the entire GCC region with resilient and low latency connectivity," commented Ivo Ivanov, CEO of DE-CIX during the celebrations yesterday. "I would like to thank our partner du/datamena and the TDRA for the

excellent collaboration over the past decade in bringing the UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX to life as the heart of an international Internet hub, and look forward to a bright future working together for the next decade of digital development. Beyond that, I am delighted that we are now able to offer UAE-IX customers the opportunity to connect in a cost-effective and low latency way with customers on SmartHub IX. This agreement will revolutionize connectivity in the Middle Eastern region and lead the way in creating a more integrated connectivity landscape, solidifying Dubai's standing as the digital pearl of the GCC."

Over the last decade, Dubai has become recognized as an international Internet hub. With high-quality digital infrastructure, stable and cost-effective power, and a stable regulatory environment, the UAE has been able to attract more networks than anywhere else in the GCC. While in 2012, 90% of data traffic that should have been exchanged locally needed to leave the GCC region to be exchanged in Europe, ten years later, the reverse is the case: in 2022, 90% of local data is exchanged locally, resulting in a vast improvement in the latency (response time) of connections and the performance of applications. Together with the UAE's 50-year plan, Dubai's ambitions to transform into a smart city, and Abu Dhabi's Ghadan 21 program striving towards a knowledge-based economy, this has resulted in the UAE ranked 12th on the IMD World Competitive Ranking, and Dubai becoming a center of attraction for international investment and global corporations.

Extending reach to new communities

Furthermore, the UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX and Etisalat by e&'s SmartHub IX, in an initiative led by the TDRA, have just implemented a trailblazing collaboration to connect the two leading interconnection platforms in the United Arab Emirates to create a Union of Internet Exchanges. The initiative involves DE-CIX, with its partner du/datamena, and Etisalat by e&, along with the support of the regulator in the UAE, the TDRA. The interconnection of the two platforms enables all connected customers, regardless of provider, the opportunity to interconnect with each other cost-effectively – this is the first collaboration of its kind in the entire Middle East. Services available include peering, and enterprise interconnection services like DE-CIX Cloud Exchange and direct interconnection with the Microsoft 365 software as a service clouds (MAPS – Microsoft Azure Peering Service), as well as access to the DE-CIX global ecosystem via DE-CIX Marseille.

Commenting on this step, H.E. Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, TDRA Director General, said: "Our national journey, since the union in 1971, has reflected the meanings of integration and unity of efforts to achieve major goals. Today, we celebrate an achievement that bears these

meanings and puts them in their rightful place within the process of future shaping. This initiative is an embodiment of the wise leadership directives towards enhancing interconnection and integration to serve the objectives of attracting investments, providing the best customer experience while maintaining data security and improving response time. All this will lead to advancing the process of transformation towards a comprehensive and integrated digital lifestyle.”

H.E. Al Mesmar added: “We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the achievement of the initiative “Unition of Internet Exchanges”, particularly Emirates Telecommunications Group Company (Etisalat by e&), Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (du), and all other parties involved in this project. We appreciate their cooperation to overcome challenges and achieve this goal, which will make the UAE a hub for interconnection at the regional level. The parties worked together for a long time before reaching this result, and today we are reaping the fruits of this effort, which reflects the correctness of our bet on the ICT sector to create a prosperous future in light of the major digital transformations.”

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary celebrations and the announcement of the Union of Internet Exchanges, Fahad Al Hassawi, CEO of EITC, said: “We congratulate DE-CIX on the past 10 years of operations of the UAE-IX. Seamless and reliable communication is an essential pillar for modern organizations that seek to keep pace with the requirements of the digital future. Therefore, providing enhanced communication capabilities supported by an interconnection ecosystem that meets the requirements of organizations is the main driver of our new partnership with DE-CIX and Etisalat. As part of this partnership, we will harness the world-class capabilities of our datamena center to create and design hybrid environments for ICT systems. Our interconnection services and solutions that we will provide under this partnership will enhance the capabilities and quality of modern communication technologies, enabling our partners and all stakeholders to establish direct and secure communications and link their operations across multiple sites, as well as achieve savings in time and costs.”

Accelerating growth of international digital hub

UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX is the first carrier and data center neutral Internet Exchange for the Middle East. It has experienced in excess of 30% growth in 2022 and more than 180% since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, reflecting the platform’s criticality for the digital economy and digital welfare of the region. As an example of this criticality, in 2020, UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX was able to provide seamless support for the government’s 400% upgrade of their connectivity to Microsoft to support the migration of all 1.1 million pupils in the UAE to

home-schooling in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. The UAE-IX's cutting-edge technical set-up, based on the multi-award-winning DE-CIX Apollon platform, enables hyper-scalability and Cloud Exchange features alongside its global peering services. Connected customers can reach 50+ cloud providers, from specialist niche providers to global hyperscalers.

Photo caption: Ivo Ivanov, CEO of DE-CIX, and Abou Moustafa, Vice President of Enterprise, Business and datamena at du, cutting the cake for the 10th birthday of UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX.

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About UAE-IX

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in operations, the UAE-IX is the first carrier-neutral Internet Exchange for the Middle East that interconnects global networks and, above all, network operators and content providers in the GCC region. UAE-IX is built on a fully redundant switching platform powered by DE-CIX, the world's leading Internet Exchange operator. UAE-IX is located in Dubai in two high-class carrier-neutral data centers, datamena and Equinix. Initiated by the UAE's Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) and powered by DE-CIX, UAE-IX delivers a highly available local alternative for regional traffic exchange, localizing Internet content. For more information, please go to www.uae-ix.net.

About DE-CIX

DE-CIX (German Commercial Internet Exchange) is the world's leading operator of Internet nodes, offering its peering, cloud and interconnection services in over 40 metro regions in Europe, Africa, North America, the Middle East, India and Southeast Asia. DE-CIX is accessible from data centers in over 600 cities worldwide and connects thousands of network operators (carriers), Internet service providers (ISPs), content providers and corporate networks from more than 100 countries. DE-CIX in Frankfurt am Main is one of the largest Internet Exchanges in the world, with a data throughput of almost 30 terabits per second (Tbps) and over 2021 connected networks. Over 200 employees from more than 30 nations form the backbone of the DE-CIX success story in Germany and around the world. Since the early days of the Internet, DE-CIX has played a decisive role in shaping the framework conditions of the network of the present and the future in various global governing bodies. As an operator of critical IT infrastructure, DE-CIX bears a great responsibility for the smooth, fast and secure exchange of data between people, companies and organizations at its global locations. Further information is available at www.de-cix.net.

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